

COUNCIL COMMUNIQUE

1 MAY 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Council welcomed Mrs Loren Collyer, Interim Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership, who was attending the meeting as an observer.

The meeting was held on the Callaghan campus.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The Council discussed safety shares and was joined by the Associate Director Wellbeing Health and Safety, and the Chief People and Culture Officer for an overview of the Wellbeing Health and Safety Q1 Quarterly Update.

Council noted the increased focus on psychosocial risk and psychological safety, both within our University and across the sector.

UPDATE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

The Chancellor provided an overview of her ongoing engagement program with University students, staff and external stakeholders. The Council was also briefed on key outcomes from recent meetings of the University Chancellors Council (UCC) and the NSW Vice Chancellor and Chancellors forum.

Council noted the successful official opening of the Gosford Campus, attended by the Minister for Education The Hon Jason Clare MP, as well as the strong turnout and positive reception at the recent Sydney Alumni event.

Following an April meeting with representatives from the Colleges, the Chancellor shared the latest correspondence from the Professoriate Collegia Contact Group outlining their areas of concern. Council was updated on the action plan being developed by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic and Global to address these matters. The Chancellor reaffirmed that Council will continue to monitor progress and maintain oversight of actions arising from these concerns.

Council also viewed a recording of the recent address delivered by Undergraduate Student representative, Ms Ivana Pedruco-Aniceto, at the All Staff Forum.

UPDATE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Vice-Chancellor provided an update on his recent engagements, including the Wollotuka Cultural Standards Launch, the official launch of *Looking Ahead 2030*, the opening of the Gosford Innovation Hub and the City of Newcastle International Student Welcome.

Council was advised of measures implemented to support staff and students impacted by the Middle East conflict. Council also noted that legislation establishing the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) has passed the Parliament and received Royal Assent.

Council was updated on actions underway to improve workplace psychological safety, including adjustments to the academic calendar in response to staff feedback and a review of the Academic Workload Allocation Model.

The Vice-Chancellor also reported on the University's appearance at the NSW Upper House Inquiry into Universities, held in Newcastle on 30 April 2026.

LOOKING AHEAD 2030 PROPOSED KPI PERFORMANCE THRESHOLDS

Mr Joel Palmer, Director Strategy, Planning & Performance, joined the meeting to outline the proposed 2030 KPI performance thresholds and the cadence and approach to the ongoing performance reporting of Looking Ahead 2030.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – OUR APPROACH

Mr Anthony Molina, Chief Digital & Information Officer, Mr Ben Grobler, Chief Information Security Officer and Professor Belinda Tynan, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic and Global, joined the meeting to facilitate a broad discussion on artificial intelligence and its impacts on education and governance.

FINANCE & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chair provided an update on issues discussed at the Committee meeting on 17 April including the

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Chief Financial Officer's report, the Semester 1 forecast update, Modern Slavery Statement 2025, an update on Hydraulics procurement and the plan for the Ourimbah campus.

RISK COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chair provided an update on issues discussed at the Committee meeting on 17 April including receipt of the 2025 Animal Research Ethics (AREC) and Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Annual Reports. The Council extended their thanks to the AREC and HREC Committee members for their ongoing work and comprehensive reports.

NOMINATIONS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chair provided an update on issues discussed at the Committee meeting on 16 April including the proposed scope for the upcoming Council Performance review, an update on Council membership, honorary degree nominations, Governance Rule amendments and the Rules Governing Traffic and Parking.

PEOPLE & CULTURE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chair provided an update on issues discussed at the Committee meeting on 16 April including an update on the correspondence received from staff, communications across the University, research and innovation perspectives on industry engagement and the implementation plan for the Strategic Review Health Check report.

CHANCELLOR'S COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chancellor provided an update on issues discussed at the Committee meeting on 16 April. The Chancellor briefed Council on the endorsement of the Committee in relation to the proposed ELT salary increases, including eligibility and consideration of individual performance, as proposed by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Chancellor outlined the decision of the Committee in relation to the salary of the Vice-Chancellor for 2026, noting that as with ELT, consideration was given to a range of factors including CPI, performance against agreed criteria

and the Council policy of keeping the Vice-Chancellor's salary close to the median of VC salaries, with the Committee having determined that the Vice-Chancellor's performance was in the 'exceeding expectations' category.

The Committee was also provided with an update on progress of enterprise agreement negotiations and emerging workforce issues.

ACADEMIC SENATE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President of Academic Senate provided an overview of his report including the appointment of Assoc Prof Geoffry De Iliius to the Deputy PAS role for the duration of 2026, with Assoc Prof Adam Collison holding the position for 2027. The President noted that reports were received from the Vice-Chancellor, the Research Committee Chair, Teaching and Learning Committee Chair, the College Board Chairs, the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Board Chair and the NAIHE Academic Board Chair. Council was advised of the discussion around academic risks identified in the President's report and noted the Academic Senate Annual Assurance report for 2025 which was attached.

SENIOR EXECUTIVE UPDATES

The Chief Operating Officer, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic & Global, Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research & Innovation and Interim Deputy Vice-Chancellor Engagement & Equity provided Council with updates on their areas of business.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Council will be held on 3 July 2026 at Callaghan campus.

CONTACT: Mr Hamish Lithgow, Acting University Secretary

To find more information on the role of the University Council see the [Council](#) page on our website.

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Council donations to the Student Pantry

L-R: Chancellor The Hon Patricia Forsythe AM, Ms Laura Dowling (postgraduate student representative), Miss Ivana Pedruco-Aniceto (undergraduate student representative), , Vice-Chancellor Professor Alex Zelinsky AO

Updates provided 21 May 2026